CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   A printer configuration method, comprising:

5   receiving an email print message addressed to a network alias, the network alias being associated with an automated print agent employed for performing an email print;

identifying a printer specified in the email print message;

determining if the automated print agent is configured for printing to

10   the printer; and

automatically configuring the automated print agent to print to the printer upon a determination that the automated print agent is not configured to print to the printer.

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2.   The printer configuration method of claim 1, further comprising associating a domain name with the automated print agent, wherein the network alias includes the domain name.

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3.   The printer configuration method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining if the automated print agent is configured for printing to the printer further comprises: '

obtaining a printer network identifier associated with the printer from

25   the email print message; and

determining if the printer network identifier is listed in a printer directory associated with the automated print agent.

30   4.   The printer configuration method of claim 3, wherein the step of obtaining the printer network identifier associated with the printer from the email print message further comprises obtaining the printer network identifier from the network alias.

5.	The printer configuration method of claim 1, wherein the step of automatically configuring the automated print agent to print to the printer upon the determination that the automated print agent is not configured to print to the printer further comprises determining whether the printer is listed in a network resources

5	database associated with a network that includes the printer.

6.	The printer configuration method of claim 5, wherein the step of determining whether the printer is listed in the network resources database further

10	comprises:

obtaining a printer network identifier associated with the printer from the email print message; and

determining if the printer network identifier is listed in the network resource database.

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7.	The printer configuration method of claim 6, wherein the step of obtaining the printer network identifier associated with the printer from the email print message further comprises obtaining the printer network identifier associated

20	with the printer from the network alias.

8.	The printer configuration method of claim 1, wherein the step of automatically configuring the automated print agent to print to the printer upon the

25	determination that the automated print agent is not configured to print to the printer further comprises registering the printer in a printer directory associated with the automated print agent.

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9.   The printer configuration method of claim 8, wherein the step of registering the printer in the printer directory associated with the automated print agent further comprises:

        identifying a printer driver associated with the printer; and

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        recording a name of the printer driver in the printer directory.

10.   The printer configuration method of claim 8, wherein the step of registering the printer in the printer directory associated with the automated print

10 agent further comprises:

        identifying a print server associated with the printer; and

        recording a name of the print server in the printer directory.

15   11.   A program embodied in a computer readable medium for printer configuration, comprising:

        code that identifies a printer designated in an email print message addressed to a network alias, the network alias being associated with an automated print agent employed for performing an email print;

20   code that determines if the automated print agent is configured for printing to the printer; and

        code that automatically configures the automated print agent to print to the printer upon a determination that the automated print agent is not configured to print to the printer.

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12.   The program embodied in a computer readable medium of claim 11, further comprising a domain name associated with the automated print agent, the network alias including the domain name.

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13.   The program embodied in a computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the code that determines if the automated print agent is configured for printing to the printer, further comprises:

    code to obtain a printer network identifier associated with the printer
5   from the email print message; and

    code to determine if the printer network identifier is listed in a printer directory associated with the automated print agent.

10   14.   The program embodied in a computer readable medium of claim 13, wherein the code to obtain the printer network identifier associated with the printer from the email print message further comprises code that obtains the printer network identifier from the network alias.

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15.   The program embodied in a computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the code that automatically configures the automated print agent to print to the printer upon a determination that the automated print agent is not configured to print to the printer further comprises code that determines whether the printer is
20   listed in a network resources database associated with a network that includes the printer.

16.   The printer configuration method of claim 15, wherein code that
25   determines whether the printer is listed in the network resources database further comprises:

    code that obtains a printer network identifier associated with the printer from the email print message; and

    code that determines if the printer network identifier is listed in the
30   network resource database associated with the network.

17. The printer configuration method of claim 16, wherein the code that obtains the printer network identifier associated with the printer from the email print message further comprises code that obtains the printer network identifier associated with the printer from the network alias.

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18. The program embodied in a computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the code that automatically configures the automated print agent to print to the printer upon a determination that the automated print agent is not configured to
10 print to the printer further comprises code that registers the printer in a printer directory associated with the automated print agent.

19. The program embodied in a computer readable medium of claim 18,
15 wherein the code that registers the printer in the printer directory associated with the automated print agent further comprises:
    code that identifies a printer driver associated with the printer; and
    code that records a name of the printer driver in the printer directory.

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20. The program embodied in a computer readable medium of claim 18, wherein the code that registers the printer in the printer directory associated with the automated print agent further comprises:
    code that identifies a print server associated with the printer; and
25   code that records a name of the print server in the printer directory.

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21.   A system for printer configuration, comprising:

means for identifying a printer designated in an email print message addressed to a network alias, the network alias being associated with an automated print agent employed for performing an email print;

5   means for determining if the automated print agent is configured for printing to the printer; and

means for automatically configuring the automated print agent to print to the printer upon a determination that the automated print agent is not configured to print to the printer.

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22.   The system of claim 21, further comprising a domain name associated with the automated print agent, the network alias including the domain name.

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23.   The system of claim 21, wherein the means for determining if the automated print agent is configured for printing to the printer, further comprises:

means for obtaining a printer network identifier associated with the

20   printer from the email print message; and

means for determining if the printer network identifier is listed in a printer directory associated with the automated print agent.

25   24.   The system of claim 21, wherein the means for automatically configuring the printer in the email print system upon the determination that the printer is not configured in the email print system further comprises means for determining whether the printer is listed in a network resources database associated with a network that includes the printer.

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25.   The system of claim 21, wherein the means for automatically configuring the automated print agent to print to the printer upon a determination that the automated print agent is not configured to print to the printer further comprises means for registering the printer in a printer directory associated with the
5   automated print agent.